

REMARKS

Claims 9-10 have been canceled.

Claims 1-8 and 11-27 remain pending in the application. Of these, claims 19-24 are withdrawn from consideration and claims 1, 11 and 25-27 are currently amended. Claim 1 is an independent apparatus claim and claims 25 and 26 are independent method claims.

Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claims 9 and 10 have been canceled. Claim 11 has been amended to depend on the amended claim 1. As the Examiner notes, the specification states that if the shaft exceeds the maximum bend angle, the shaft will break. Therefore, Applicant believes the specification defines the maximum bend angle and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

The claims are rejected in various combinations under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Pond III U.S. 3,087,728 (Pond '728). Pond '728 discloses a shaft 12 having an upper section 14 and a lower section 16. The two sections 14 and 16 are made of a flexible material and include sockets 26 and 28, respectively. A frangible, i.e., easily breakable, pin 38 is received within sockets 26 and 28 to join the sections 26 and 28. A striking force is transmitted to the pin 38 to break the pin and thereby separate the shaft into the two sections 14 and 16. Independent claims 1, 25 and 26 have been amended to clarify that the shaft is bent about a score line. Pond '728 does not teach or suggest the bending of a shaft along a score line. The frangible pin of Pond '728 passes across the score line. Being frangible, the pin would break in response to bending of the shaft along the score line and would not resiliently bend about the score line and return to a generally straightened and original condition once the bending force is removed.

Allowance of claims 1-8, 11-18, and 25-27 and consideration of withdrawn dependent claims 19-24 drawn to additional species is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

By Patricia A. Limbach
Patricia A. Limbach
Registration No. 50,295

RYAN KROMHOLZ & MANION, S.C.

Post Office Box 26618

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226

(262) 783 - 1300

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